

Address at the Auditorium, IGCIC Complex, Phoenix on 21 June 2016 on the occasion of the International Yoga Day hosted by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture, the Indian High Commission, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life & the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in association with Arya Sabha Mauritius & the Art of Living Foundation, Mauritius

THE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF YOGA IN DAY-TO-DAY-LIFE

The origin of the word Yoga

Yoga (pronounced as Yog) is a field of knowledge originating from the Vedas. The word Yoga is a derivative from the Sanskrit word *Yuja*, i.e. to join, unite, connect and link-up.

The purpose of the Yog Darshan

Besides the spiritual aspect and objectives, the aphorisms (*sutras*) indicates that the practical applications in our day-to-day life also leads to 100% success in what we may be doing, be it studies, sports, any type of work be it for pay or any other form of reward, selfless service (*nishkāma sevā*) ...etc.

Definition of Yoga

The second aphorism of the Yoga Darshanam compiled by Sage Patanjali states: *Yogashchittavritti nirodhah* (Y.D. 1.02). Yoga is the (*nirodhah*) silencing of (*chitta vritti*) the waves of mental and emotional activities.

It flows from the above that Yoga is beyond the bundle of exercises (*āsana – vyāyāma*) to remain fit physically as we commonly believe. These are needed to keep the body fit to be able to delve into the *ashtānga yoga* as elucidated by Maharishi Patanjali in his treatise, the Yoga Darshanam which contains 196 sutras or aphorisms.

Ashtānga yoga is the eight-fold process of Yoga constituting of (i) *Yama* - social discipline, (ii) *Niyama* - personal discipline, (iii) *āsana* - posture, (iv) *prānāyāma* - control over breathing process, (v) *pratyāhāra* - introversion of senses, (vi) *dhāraṇa* -focus, *Dhyāna* - meditation, *Samādhi* – self & God-reaisation

The soul and the body: two distinct entities

The soul is the traveller who orders the driver as to the destination to be reached. The physical body is the chariot. The intellect as the driver decides the direction in line with the order from the traveller. The intellect commands the mind which represents the reins that connect the driver and the horses, i.e. the five sense organs of perception and five organs of actions.

Only a correct order by the traveller will lead to the appropriate destination. The body, the intellect, the mind, the sense organs are all inert and activated only by the soul.

The silencing of the unrest of mental and emotional activities empowers us

- *To be less disturbed by untimely, superfluous thoughts.*
- *To fine-tune our observation faculty and our focus on the subject matter of our pursuit - study, work, play ...etc.*
- *To have better self-control, self-understanding, creativity, compassion, peace of mind.*
- *To live in the present with amplified positivity.*
- *To experience fulfilment, enlightenment and peace beyond all understanding and expression, which can neither be bought nor possessed - the bliss of being one with nature or the Divine*

Consequences of mental and emotional activities

Mental and emotional activities yield grief and happiness. Those heading to truth, virtue, true knowledge, total commitment in the world yet remain uncoloured by the world (disinterest in things that cause undue attachment), benevolence, self and God-realisation yield happiness. Turned towards untruth, vice / immorality, ignorance, selfishness / greed, extravagance / immoderation, they yield misery.

The goals of human life

Human beings are on the constant look out for happiness and ward off misery. Yoga Darshan spells out: *Heya-hetu; hāna-hāna upāya*. We should know the causes of suffering to be able to ward off suffering. The universal values spelt out in the first two steps of Yoga, namely - Yama and Niyama shall then top up our lives with happiness, in the same way as light dispels darkness.

Price: the continual devotion of the aspirant

Sa tu dirghakālanairantaryasatkārasevito dridhabhumi (Y.D. 1.14) Such practice (*sa tu*) needs to be over a long time (*dirgha kāla*), constant / regular (*nairantarya*), and total commitment, passion, devotion (*satkār asevitah*).

Success in any field, be it the upbringing of children, sports, studies, research, discoveries and inventions, meditation for self-realisation and God-realisation, etc. are achieved only on the above terms and conditions. These are no new theories; they originate from the Vedas and subsequently encoded by sages.

Barriers to Yoga

The following are hurdles in the path of the aspirant who strives to silence the fluctuating mental and emotional activities: (a) Physical imbalance, sickness ... (*Vyādhi*); (b) Playing truant in our practice (*Styāna*); (c) Doubts (*Sanshaya*); (d) irresponsible, unconcerned attitude (*Pramāda*); (e) Little or no consideration to put up our utmost efforts to realise our goals (*Ālasya*); (f) Extravagance, overindulgence in the subject matter of our senses (*Avirati*) –; (g) contrary knowledge (*Bhrāntidarshan*); (h) Failure (*Alabdhabhumikatwa*); (i) Letting go or absence of any effort to consolidate realisations (*Anavasthitatwa*). (YD 1.30)

Afflictions arise out of (i) ignorance, confusion (*avidyā*); (ii) ego, delusion (*asmitā*); (iii) attachment to / craving for that which gives pleasure (*raga*); (iv) hatred for that which gives pain (*dvesha*); and (v) fear of discontinuity or death (*abhinivesha*). (YD 2.3)

The following are causes that disturbs tranquillity and focus: (a) Grief (*Dukha*) (b) post-failure irritation (*Dauramanasya*); (c) shaking of limbs (*Angamejayatwa*); (d) Irregular breathe in and breathe out process (*Shwāsa prashwāsa*). (Y.D. 1.31)

Codes of behaviour

The four behavioural patterns are (1) Friendship (*maitree*); (2) Compassion / empathy (*karunā*); (3) Contentment (*muditā*); and (4) Indifference (*upekshā*) to be exercised respectively towards those who are (1) happy, (2) suffering and in need, (3) those who are ethical in thoughts, speech and actions, and (4) cruel and hinder physical, moral / spiritual and social progress. (YD 1.33)

We need to keep the keys of our inner peace and happiness with us and not hand them to others ...*Apne mana ki shānti ke chābi apne sāth rakhein, dusron ke hāth mein nahin denā!!* The above four behavioural patterns empowers us to be happy at all times and undisturbed by whatever or however the person in front of us may act and / or react towards us.

Handing the keys of your happiness to others equals to a loss of control ...and either a crash or brutal landing into the gutters. It is best to keep the keys of your quietude with you.

Music Day

Music Day, celebrated today June 21, is also time to delve into the sounds of silence. We live in an era of noise where noise is the signage of the world. To break with that noise we go on retreat where silence hums ...**but at what cost?**

Yoga brings us back to harmony. The silence vibrates in the pure field of consciousness ...beyond ego ...beyond the physical / physiological silence ...**and at no cost.**

Silence: the womb for creativity

That silence creates a conducive environment for the true self to emerge. It is the womb from which creativity is born ...be it the masterpiece of Beethoven, Mozart, Ravi Shankar and recently Resul Pookutty, the sound-mixer in Slumdog Millionaire.

Resul forcefully emphasized on the value of those moments of silence which empowered him to create that music ...and eventually bag an award, the first Indian in the 80+ years of the International Oscar.

The deaf and the dumb best communicates in silence. Silence is sunshine ...rapture ...golden whereas company is clouds ...doubts ...brass. The idle mind is the devil-at-work ...the silent mind is the angel-at-work.

Let us value the moments of silence which Yoga gives us at no cost ...save some time for the practice. Results are almost immediate. On the occasion of the International Day of Music and Yoga, I wish you all ...lots of happy moments of silence.

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